



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1940.

PHOTOS available from Fish and Wildlife Service.

MOVES GROUND, NEST, AND SITTING WILD BIRD 25 MILES TO PHOTOGRAPHERS STUDIO

Out of the woods of Maine comes a tale that would be branded as equal to Baron Munchhausen's best were it not for the fact that photographs and reliable witnesses can attest to its authenticity, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. It's the story of a man who moved 25 square-feet of ground 25 miles to a photographer's studio to get good pictures of a woodcock sitting on a nest.

Here are the facts:

John Stobie, of Waterville, Maine, an employee of the State Inland Fish and Game Commission, was working near the Lily Bay Hatchery in Piscataquis County, in the north-central part of the State, when he spied the woodcock sitting on its nest. As he approached and examined the bird, Stobie was surprised to see that it did not flush. He realized then that the eggs were probably on the verge of hatching.

"This is an opportunity to get a really good picture," thought Stobie.

The nearest photographer was 25 miles away in Greenville. Stobie called him. The photographer explained that to get the clear pictures Stobie wanted would require too much equipment and would be too expensive.

Undaunted, Stobie grabbed a pick and a shovel and went to work. He dug a 5-foot square around the sitting woodcock. The female didn't bat an eye.

With the help of some interested spectators, Stobie lifted the 5-foot piece of ground into a large box and put the box on a truck. Then he hauled the precious load to Greenville and into the photographer's studio.

It was a photographer's field day, according to reports. The woodcock was treated like some Hollywood Star taking camera tests for a new part. She submitted to close-ups, medium shots, side shots, a picture of the nest, and another of the eggs, and during this time stayed as close to her clutch as she could.

When the pictures were taken, Stobie re-packed the ground, the nest, the eggs, and the woodcock into the box, hauled it back to the field near the hatchery, and replaced the sod exactly as he found it.

According to reports, the woodcock resumed a normal schedule and later hatched her young.